

# Socratic Seminar Guidelines

## Expectations for Participating

- Come prepared
  - You will be given EXTENSIVE time in-class to annotate your text and prepare for this discussion
- Participate, Participate, Participate!
  - Make sure you back-up your comments with supporting evidence and/or facts
- Try to comment on someone else's previous statement before giving your own
- Ask for clarification if you do not understand someone else's statement
  - *"I think you said this, is that right?"*
- Listen RESPECTFULLY when others speak
  - You will lose points on your final grade if you **interrupt** or engage in **side-conversations** during the seminar!
- Stay ON-TOPIC
  - Personal stories should have a direct connection to the facts
- Use your speaking time fairly
  - You DO NOT need to raise your hand, but be mindful of your "airtime"
  - Contribute to the conversation, but DO NOT control the conversation!
- Keep discussion lively by asking open-ended, thought-provoking questions
  - \*Questions should be designed to elicit multiple perspectives and should be clear and concise. Numerous answers can be correct if students stay on topic.
  - *"What do you think the author is trying to say when he states..."*
  - *"What do you think the most striking image or metaphor is in the text?"*
  - *"Where does that idea come from in the text?"*
  - *"What does this word or phrase mean?"*
- Disagree with comments, NOT individuals
  - Never put anyone down for their opinions or statements
  - *"I understand and appreciate your point, however I disagree because..."*

**Remember that the group members are responsible for the success of the discussion!**

# Socratic Seminar Checklist

Be sure to do the following while participating in your group's discussion:

- ☑ Prepare, prepare, prepare! Be sure to have plenty of textual evidence and responses planned ahead of time.
- ☑ Participate!
- ☑ Make eye contact with your discussion members
- ☑ Refer back to the text to support your comments
- ☑ Ask at least ONE new question that you have prepared ahead of time
- ☑ Ask follow-up questions to other student's statements
- ☑ Respond to other speakers (*"I can see how you feel that way, however, I see it differently..."*)
- ☑ Summarize and add to another speaker's ideas (*"I'd like to add to John's comment that Elie Wiesel uses night as a symbol of inner darkness. I agree with this and also think that..."*)
- ☑ Encourage other participants to speak (*"John, what do you think about Anna's answer?"*)
- ☑ Be patient and allow other speakers to completely finish their response (*Do not interrupt!*)
- ☑ Stay focused on the discussion at hand (*Do not participate in any side conversations - even if they pertain to the discussion!*)

☑ Give every member an opportunity to share their thoughts *(Do not dominate the conversation! You have two ears and one mouth for a reason. Be twice as quick to listen before speaking.)*